



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

**For Immediate Release:**

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### **‘Mastermind’ of Unsuccessful Murder-for-Hire Plot Convicted of Assault and Conspiracy**

A 49-year-old Washington, D.C. man, whom prosecutors described as “the mastermind” of an unsuccessful, murder-for-hire plot against his work supervisor, has been convicted of first-degree assault and conspiracy to commit first-degree assault. A jury returned guilty verdicts against Eric Ricardo Exum of the 600 block of Edgewood St., NE following a four-day trial in Howard County Circuit Court yesterday. Exum is one of three men charged in a brutal assault on the Sykesville man at a Jessup gas station last fall.

According to police and prosecutors, at 6:45 a.m. on October 4, 2017, Paul Albritton parked his vehicle at a BP gas station and entered the station’s convenience store located in the 8800 block of Washington Blvd. His passenger, Exum, initially waited in the truck while he went inside. When Albritton returned to his vehicle, a man later identified as Malcolm Xavier Littlejohn approached Albritton and struck him in the back of the head with a 3½-foot length of wooden two-by-four before fleeing. Albritton was transported to the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center suffering from life threatening brain trauma.

During the trial, prosecutors methodically connected Exum to the assault using surveillance video, telephone calls and text messages between Exum and Littlejohn in the days leading up to the assault including just minutes before the attack, cell phone geo-tracking and financial transactions at a nearby credit union suggesting payment. Prosecutors also played a detention center recording in which Exum is heard telling the also-incarcerated Littlejohn, “Ain’t no need for both of us to go down; I’m gonna make you all right if you stay behind bars for a second.” During her closing arguments, Assistant State’s Attorney Elizabeth Rosen repeated, “This is not coincidence; this is a conspiracy.”

Last month, Littlejohn, then-20 of the 11000 block of Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, pleaded guilty to first-degree assault and conspiracy to commit first-degree assault. He will be sentenced September 13. A third man was subsequently charged in the assault. Antwan Zahir Mayhew, 38 of the 3700 block of Donnell Dr., District Heights, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit first-degree assault on July 2 and received a fully-suspended, 10- year sentence.

Jurors deliberated for three hours before returning the guilty verdicts. The jury also found Exum not guilty of attempted first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder. Judge Timothy J. McCrone set a September 27 sentencing date. Exum is held without bond at the Howard County Detention Center and faces a maximum of 50 years in prison.

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